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Vagaries

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CHARLES GRANVILLE



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VAGARIES

CHARLES GRANVILLE

1915

THE DRYDEN PUBLISHING CO.
10, ESSEX STREET, STRAND, LONDON, W.C.

NOTE.

Twelve of the following poems have already appeared in THE NEW AGE and VANITY FAIR; I am indebted to the courtesy of the editors of these papers for permission to reprint here.

THE AUTHOR.

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

POEMS: 5/- NET.

SOME PRESS OPINIONS

The Bookman.

There is something very pleasant about these poems of Mr. Charles Granville's: they have a morning freshness and a quiet charm that are difficult to define. A spirit of hope breathes through them: they touch on many aspects of life with a breadth of vision, a restful philosophy of outlook that are not the every-day moods of the modern Muses. Of many poets you have to write that they reach no sure level of achievement, but every now and then break out into some isolated magic line, some solitary beautiful thought: with Mr. Granville it is otherwise. He gives us no purple shreds and patches, but keeps always at a happy level of thought and expression. His lyrics are not so passionate as they are tender, gracious, charged with subdued emotion. He writes of life as one who has felt the sorrow, as well as the sweetness of it, and of nature as one who loves her. We welcome Mr. Granville into the ranks of those few living poets whose books we keep as well as read.

The Daily Telegraph.

In those small but cultured circles which frankly profess to be interested in the finer shades of life not, as yet, touched upon by the average novel, Mr. Charles Granville is already known as the author of several stories and sketches of unusual merit. His book of poems is a more ambitious attempt at subtle forms of interpretation, but is wholly successful. It would be an injustice to Mr. Granville if one endeavoured to indicate his style by quoting odd stanzas from the charming lyrics he has scattered through the volume—"Constancy," for example, or "The Evanescent"—or from his really power ballad, "In the Condemned Cell." . . . Modern Literature will be all the poorer if he does not give us some more lyrics.

916648

The Daily Graphic.

There is a story told of Robert Browning that, when accused of obscurity in his verse, he replied, "I have never pretended to offer a substitute for a cigar or a game of dominoes to an idle man." The same justification may be offered for Mr. Granville's poetry. Not that it is obscure. On the contrary, Mr. Granville is wise enough to realise—what many of our modern bards appear to have forgotten—that articulateness is of the very essence of good poetry. But the dominant note of his verse is what Rossetti would have called its "fundamental brain stuff." Here is a poet who is courageous enough to face most of the problems of life squarely. He will have no truce with insincerity or make-believe. "Things are what they are." Yet even in the poisonous core, some beauty is discerned. The attitude is that of a reasoned optimism, tempered with a sadness that seems inseparable from all modern poetry which is not merely a jingle of words. There are passages in these poems the beauty of which it is impossible to miss. . . . Mr. Granville has written a book which is a book. It is a genuine contribution to the poetry of the age.

The Literary World.

Mr. Granville is a seer with whom we are learning to reckon.

The Publishers' Circular.

They are distinct and delightful additions to modern poetry.

MR. LEWIS MELVILLE.

Mr. Charles Granville's principal merit as a poet is to be found in the music of his verse, and the easy flow and happy choice of his language. He sees and cries aloud the delights of beauty rather than the praise of ugliness.

MR. ARTHUR RANSOM.

In all that Mr. Granville writes there is specially conspicuous the sympathetic human touch, and this comes out with particular prominence in his new book of poems. It is a genuine addition to our literature from a writer of exceptional vigour and full of the spirit of the future.

The Birmingham Post.

He has a pleasing, reflective cast of mind. "A Life's Love" has a lilt that comes near to Mr. Robert Bridge's classic perfection.

The Daily Mirror.

Mr. Granville's muse is sometimes altogether charming.

The Aberdeen Free Press.

He rises at once into the region of genuine poetry.

VAGARIES

WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT A MAN?

Take, if you will, all gifts away—the whole—
So you but leave me this vagarious soul,
That sings in flight through interstellar spaces
One day, the next treads labyrinthine mazes
Of the grief-vine, pressing from the God-bloomed fruit
A vintage coarse and crude beyond dispute,
But exquisite of bouquet when, in time,
In quiet nooks of age, I shall sip in rhyme
Or melody the richly beaded cup—
Aye, leave me this, all else will I yield up.

Though oft it chaos be—an armèd camp
Loud with the din of never-trucing foes,
Whose standards are the lily and the rose—
Yet through this clashing night it shows a lamp.

It heaves and ruffles to all winds that be ;
But, a fathom deep, is a still eternity.

Aye, leave me this, my one sufficient all ;
The rest are but the children's kite or ball.

WHAT WILL'ST THOU ?

A summer day ; one more ; 'tis all I crave
Of life, that phantom bark on a death-bound wave ;
A day that slips 'tween sun-filled scent of clover
And pleasant cool of sea-resounding cave ;
I, once again an idle, dreaming lover,
Whose thoughts turn never, never, to the grave,
Is all I crave.

That so I may in gleaming gladness spend
A day with no clouds warning of the end ;
Flitting from joy to joy like a wingèd creature
To which the earth and air conspire to lend
Delights of perfume, colour, and each feature
Ravishing sense wherever it may wend
Its day to spend.

And in that day crowd all the hope and love
That fill the soaring lark and wooing dove,
On all the days of rare unclouded weather,
With visions of a form no days remove,
But all life's mirror shows with me together,
That fashioned for me all below, above,
To hope and love.

WHAT WILL'ST THOU?—Continued

Live in this summer day all summers gone,
With roses red of promise at the dawn,
Through dappled foliage at my window peeping,
And roses white at dusk to lead me on,
Like waxen lights, to quiet place of sleeping ;
And cornfields faintly echoing through the noon
All summers gone.

And see upon this fragrant summer day
The world of men agape upon the way,
Each heart fresh-thrilled with each created wonder ;
And children wading shallow waves and spray,
Or garlanded with various meadow plunder,
Pulsing the air with laughter—all as gay
As the summer day.

And through each golden hour that glides to-night,
Make fellowship with many a wandering mite
That stays with mother-earth a day in passing,
To raise an altar to the Infinite Light ;
And join the million happy creatures massing
Their voice in praise of summer, ere each sprite
Glides into night.

POOL OF SORROWS

My soul a gusty forest is,
And in the midst a pool ;
My passions are the trees that edge
Its waters sorrowful.

Rank is the foliage of these trees,
Yet, when reflected, borrows
A quite ethereal imagery
From this my pool of sorrows.

THE MAGICIAN

This elation of my soul,
Lately steeped in grief and dole,
Is so strange ;
Yet I know the cause Divine
That hath wrought the swift and fine
Ecstatic change.

Gloom Promethean over all,
Buffetings without and gall
In my breast,
Draped the sun with mourning drear,
Filled the night with sigh and tear,
And unrest.

Suddenly Apollo came,
And with lute and tongue of flame
Drove away
All the clouds that blacked the blue,
And the dark's phantasmal crew,
By his lay ;

Set me on his magic ways,
Paved with glinting word and phrase,
Charged with might ;
Where I wander now at will,
Making halt by fount or rill
Of his light.

COMPENSATION

My weary feet had left the dusty ways
Wherein men hustle and dispute for gain.
My eyes had turned—I was sick beholding pain,—
The losers multiplied as do the days.

I was a loser, too—one who defrays
His loss with corporal thrift and bloody stain,
And byway walks where once he used the main ;
Defaming rumours in the place of praise.

The indignant heavens frowned upon my lot ;
Star children grouped in eager haste and spun
A silver web from out their belts ; they caught
A golden ray from their great King, the Sun,
And interwove it ; then dropped a thread, hot-foot,
Lifting my soul to where God's light begun.

IN THE STARS

In the stars will I set my nest—
Not with contempt and pride of fools,
Nor the false claims of him who rules,
Counting he acts at Heaven's behest.

But as a traveller on a peak—
So would I be, who, dumb, surveys
The recompense of toilsome days,
The country he set out to seek,

And finding the body's eye but fails
To gather the diversity
Of beauties that before him lie,
The lack of other sense bewails.

So will I, in my silvern height,
Bemoan my want of vision till
The very need my want fulfil,
And all earth's splendour burst to sight.

AFTER MÖRIKE'S "DENKES, O SEELE"

In some coppice—who knows where?
Proudly grows a yew ;
In some garden—who can tell?—
Springs a rosebush new :
One of these is writ to be,
Man, when you are dead,
Rooted in the darkling mould
Just above your head.

Somewhere in the meadows fair,
Two black colts content,
Graze and frolic as were life
But to pleasure lent :
Soon with slow and solemn step
With your corpse they'll go,
Ere, perhaps, the striplings have
Cast a single shoe.

TO THE WEAVERS OF STORIES

I would pay a tribute to you monarchs of romance,
Dreaming in your island homes set in fairy seas,
Wielding golden sceptres in mind-lit domains,
Crowned with the gratitude of millions you please ;
Light for the lonely ways, warmth for chillèd hearts,
Glamour on the mean and sordid rôles we play,
Halo for our wretchedness, the griefs of now and here,
Bells and flaming beacons of the far away.

Could but my tribute be the garland of a lay,
Coruscant with gleaming joys showered oft on me,
Splendid with the glories revealèd by your stories,
Then would I offer it exultingly :
Meet failing this were the heart's felt expression,
Redolent of chambers perfumed by your moods,
Echo of your laughter and deep-drawn sighs,
Thunder of the heavens and whispers of the woods.

Here's just a beaker of thanks for your quaffing—
Quaff it and rejoice, ye enchanters of the way !
Due is to you as to none other mortals
Honour perpetuate everywhere and aye ;
Here's an encore to you, a thousand silent cheers
Rising from the heart of me, stirred in the depths of me,
Joining a multitude in chorus of acclaim—
Health to you, wealth to you, dreaming lords of faerie !

SIMILITUDE

My mother earth is dear to me,
Dearer than all mortality ;
In winter's night, in summer's noon,
When going in state in snowy shoon,
Or frolicking in slippers green,
She is my dainty parent-queen,
And the chiefest of my blisses
Is her constant rain of kisses.

In this thing I likeness bear
To my queen and mother fair :
The sweats of all her labours, she
Gives to the Sun, who in high glee
Piles them black upon his towers,
To roll them back in drenching showers ;
Yet not without some interest
Does he return them to her breast,
But with elements of air
That shall make her robes more fair.

So the sweats—the sighs and tears—
Of the grief of many years
Fate upgathered in a cloud,
That fell with muttering thunders loud,
Breaking over me like a sea.

SIMILITUDE—Continued

Yet was it so ordained by Fate
That Love, an intermediate State
Between that cloud and me, should gain,
And hold with virtues of his train ;
So that diffused in every drop
Were seedlings for a joyous crop.

Thus did the garden of my soul,
Instead of being flooded whole,
Give birth to many blossoms fair,
Breathing perfumèd atmosphere.

This was a momentary feature
In which I did resemble nature ;
Which, now grown to permanence,
I praise for its great excellence.

TRYST

There was a time you sat
In cosy chat,
On dreary eves when winds were shrill,
Asking to know my will,
Warm in the glow that shone
For you alone
In a chamber of my heart—where still
The flame, by you unfanned, burns on :
But you have gone ;
And the world's chill
Is oft so keen that all my members
Unconscious are of love-red embers
In a deserted room :
Then sudden flashes memory
Your kindling eyes from out the past,
Which ask so eagerly
About the long love-fast
That I stretch out my arms to you ;
Only to find my doom
Is true :
Yet straightway comes an intuition's breath
Which saith :
“ Bide ! ”
And I know
On the dreariest night when the death-frost creeps
To my bedside
You will come
In rue
And lift me on the sad heart of you
Home.

TO SLEEP

Angel of sweet obliviousness
And calm repose,
In the shadow of thy folded wings
My eyelids close.

But take my soul to some far land,
Some river's brink,
Where from the waters of diviner life
I deep may drink.

And so restored at dawn I may
My vision cast
Upon such pleasures as defy
All sorrow's blast.

CREATORS

There was in solitude a majesty,
When the eternal mind, revolving all,
Brooded in some remote aerial hall,
Some vast recess of dim infinity,
And fashioned by supremest artistry
Each several form for Life's wide festival,
Imbuing with its essence mystical
Our sphere—making of mind earth-beauty's eye.

There is a majesty in solitude,
When poets, far withdrawn from the world's din,
Transmute to fixèd gold the passing mood :
Sharers are they of God's high throne, and kin
With Him—creators, wielding supremacy
Over the heart's chief world, humanity.

GOD'S WAY

Pack up the evidence ! I will no more
The clash and din of vain contending creeds,
But to my God, my own soul-kissing God,
Discoursing through the lake and margent reeds,
And in the woodland's multi-pillared gloom,
And silvern hawthorn censers of the brake,
In the wild rose and gladding iris bloom,
Or gaily patterned floors that cornfields make ;
Not less, in distant bells that chime or boom
On summer eves, with heaven in their wake.

SOUL

I

The wish to see myself as in a glass
Is ever with me ; only fragments peep
To meet the eyes, awatch even in sleep :
The wistful days of questful yearning pass

In scant result : an aggregate—the WAS
And IS of sense perception—lies a heap
Disjected : thought-events in memory's keep
Are separate as dew-pearls on the grass :

And tho' I know some immaterial thing,
Some essence, binds all these asundered shards
Into one whole, yet, called by any name,
It eludes the sight, as a fabled angel's wing :
And still the unresting mind strives image-wards
To fashion air, shape elemental flame !

II

Why seek an image? Why endeavour so
To cast in sensuous form the subtle power
That in the fleeting minutes of an hour
Sweeps in its ken dim vasts of time ago;

With forward gaze anticipates the glow
Of some millennium; or, when heart-storms lower,
Lifts to a sun-bared peak of reason, or bower
Of poesy, the weighted wight of woe?

Is it not enough to breathe an atmosphere;
Draw from it and its god-immingled gleam
All elements that quicken, chase the sere
And earthen, 'stablish the immortal dream?
To feel the whitening blaze in being's deeps
Leap to ecstatic touch with heaven's own steep?

SUGGESTED BY A SPANISH SONG

How loose was sleep's embrace last night !
Those words of yours were as a knell
Within my ears, till morning light,
My Isabel ;

And each word was a fruitful womb
In which a thousand tortures bred,
Peopling the mirk, the pointless gloom
About my head.

I heard them thrice and thrice again,
And thrice at every shadowy bend ;—
“ My heart is but a weight of pain
At our way's end.”

And though I knew you only spake
Of that short mile between this gate
And those gray walls that churlish make
You their inmate,

A darksome fancy made that mile
The longer way that life go-eth,
Your homely “ end ” a whited pile,
The house of Death.

SUGGESTED BY A SPANISH SONG—Continued

I felt the pain, I bore the weight
Of severance long and utter,
Till Dawn her fingers roseate
Thrust through my shutter ;

And then, and not till then, your words
Put on their right and normal hue ;
While gaily, gaily sang the birds
This moral true :

The end of love is a cloven way ;
Then slowly, slowly let us trace
The stages of our mutual day ;
And onely glad—
Since is so sad, so sad,
The parting place.

LIFE

A little fount upwells
On some snow-soilèd hill ;
In infant lustihood
Leaps hown a glancing rill.

A white gleam streaks the plain,
The stream a channel graves ;
And a dead element
Is conscious as it raves

And spurts in wilding shout,
And frets the rival course ;
Or frowns—this too is youth—
In leaf-browed pools of scorn.

A crystal river flows
Thorough the haunts of men—
Alas for purity,
For stainless origin !

LIFE—Continued

A turpid mild expanse
Moves or moves not at all ;
And nearer calls the deep,
And sweeter grows the call.

A cloud-wraith flakes the sky,
Fresh risen from the sea ;
And youth and age are past,
And soul again is free.

SHAKESPEARE

Thy name is legion, for in thee reposed
All qualities of joyance and annoy
The human heart is heir to ; thine alloy
Was of all times, all types, all climes composed.

All carnate thought was in thy mind disposed—
Haught prince and lowly peasant, babbling age
And prattling youth, the dolt, the fool, the sage—
The manifold of man thy soul disclosed !

Taken for all in all thou wert a man
Such as the gods in love might look upon ;
Whose measure lacked for nothing of their own ;
Whose vision heaven's high purposes might scan ;
Transcending all men ! Human link between
This Dust, and aught behind the welkin screen.

SONG

I would sleep, Dear ; I am weary ;
And the day is almost done ;
Boots it anything to wait for
Promise of a setting sun ?

Morrows hold no joy for me, Dear ;
Hope once sweet hath had its day ;
Naught will change its course in this world
If I go or if I stay.

Let me rest—and when the dawning
Lights the lake and thrills the wood,
Maybe I shall wake again, love,
But where I am understood.

SONNET

When as I think of thy exalted love,
And seek some earthly thing I may compare
For beauty with it, or for influence rare,
I cannot find its like, my little dove.

Nor may gem-arbours of the stellar grove,
Nor magic-math that sunken sea-meads bear,
Discover aught so ravishingly fair
As this thy passion for me, little dove.

Yet any likeness would but fail to show
The many wonders of its potency.
My little dove ! 'Tis light on all I know,
Dappling the foliage of the mind of me ;
And by its fervency my verse shall glow
With warm-hued flowers of the heart of thee.

LOVE

So great and rich a thing as Love must be
Compound of all the wondrous qualities
The heavenly alchemist employs for his
Divinest works throughout eternity.

The form that holds in trance the enraptured eye,
The hue that stirs the heart to ecstasies,
The spirit of all nations' minstrelsies,
The gorgeous pomp of Nature's sovereignty—

Of these and all besides most excellent
Is love compound—but made one entity
By constancy, that binds the manifold
Into the perfect whole for wonderment—
As poet-souls blend in verse-unity
The colours of the jewel-thoughts they hold.

WISH

Let the curlew's cry
Be my summons to die ;
Let the nightingale wail
When my spirit sets sail ;
And the ring-dove coo over me
As with white sheets they cover me ;
Let the owl—this I crave—
Guard the seal of my grave.

THE FEAST OF GRIEF

The Queen of Grief came in to sup with me ;
Her breasts were full, her eyes were sparkling bright,
Pale was her face and black her livery,
And all her comeliness was of the night ;
Soft was her various voice, like harmony
Of silken strings that whisper, out of sight ;
“ Lo ! there are royal charms in me,” she said ;
I answered bitterly : “ My love is dead.”

“ Spread feateously and fair the festal board
With services of long forgotten date ;
Bring out the funeral meats baked by the Lord ;
Supply of waters from the Lethal state ;
Deep let the flagons be ; and give the word
That Cypress over all the light abate ;
Thus,” sang she, “ shall the feast be favoured.”
I moaned : “ My love is dead, my love is dead.”

THE FEAST OF GRIEF—Continued

What is it stirs from heart to finger-tips?
Of what the food I eat, and what the drink?
I swoon! I drink the blood of my love's lips.
This meat hath taste of sepulture—I sink
Into abysmal dark; my spirit dips
Beyond the world's horizon, on death's brink;
“Nay; thou art in my bosom now,” she said.
I looked at her and sighed: “My love is dead.”

FAREWELL

Fate calls me to the night—
Nay, binds to cast me ;
Come, love—thine arms, thy lips
The night to last me.

Lower the curtains of thy heart,
And trim its flame ;
So through the leagues of starless dark
Shall glitter thy name.

Be this the cottage gleam
O'er fen and tor ;
Then shall the daydawn find
Me at thy door.

LUX IN TENEBRIS

As breezes vagrant from a summer clime
Surprise with quickening breath our winter frost ;
And by soft tarriance set the clods adream
Of Spring's bunt pageant and the singing host ;
So on this collied gloom of man's fierce rule
Rays steal from Liberty's now distant star
That with fresh hues hope's bleachèd flowers restore
And set my heart to some wild mountain air.

TO WORDSWORTH

Not often has it fallen to my lot
To hear men utter things in thy dispraise ;
For me indisputable were thy bays,
And hallowed by the Muses all thy plot.

But recently I heard one fierce and hot
Deny thy merits with such circumstance
As made me turn in haste to cast a glance,
And renew my faith, upon the sacred spot.

What happy chance ! The fragrance of the wood,
The sight of mountain, dale and fitful mere,
And all the voices of thy neighbourhood
Brought heal for heart and soul, such as thy peer,
Shakespeare, effects in his more vast demesne.
Let scorners mock ! they have nor heard nor seen.

MAY WITHIN WALLS

Pass, merry month,
 Pass quick away ;
You bring no joy,
 No day of May
As I have known
 The days of May.

Pass, swiftly pass ;
 I may not see
Your diadem,
 The hawthorn tree ;
Your emerald robes,
 Your broidery.

Pass, happy month ;
 Your rapture hymn
Of bird and bee
 For me is dim
And faint as songs
 Of Seraphim.

Pass, month of gloom,
 Brief be your stay ;
You bring to me
 No day of May
As once I knew
 The days of May.

HISTORY

Legions of gibbering figures on a stage
Muddle their parts and go ;
Another cast, the following age, steps on,
To bravely-mend the show.
With like effect ! And ever the high gods—
Our audience, fit though few—
Shake the great heavens with derisive laughter,
And call for mummers new.

THE BETTER LOT

Will you shed tears
Because old friends—you called them so—
Who flattered but a week ago
Purse lips of scorn, drop for your ears
The jest of mockery—indeed,
Impersonate the lowest breed,
Since you've become the friend in need?
Nay, cease! these men are not your peers.

Go make you whole!
Your heart bathe in the healing light
Of day, in the soothing shine of night;
Let the winds of heaven thro' your soul;
And make companions of the road
Creatures that in their lustihood
Of bloom and song fulfil their God—
These are your peers, and this your rôle.

THE MOURNING OF MORAYMA

In Granada is sound of woe ;
The golden tresses of her groves
Are dishevelled ; and Xenil's flow
Is sad with songs of severed loves.
Loud is the wail
That bruits the ills of women fair
From street and roof and patio,
And cleaves the thin, pellucid air
To Allah's azure portico
Without avail.
The Moslem Knights are low,
The last of Moorish kingdoms quakes
As the God of Israel wakes
To quell his foe.

But what frights Morayma ?
Thou gentle bird, why do thy limbs thus quiver ?
Why this wild stare devoid of lustre ? Ah !
Though Ali Atar's corse crimson the river,
Shall not thy King and spouse return
To comfort thee ?
Oh ! wherefore mourn
Forebodingly ?
Lo ! Cidi Caleb is without
To ease thy doubt.

THE MOURNING OF MORAYMA—Continued

And as the din
Increasing from the Alcacin
Fills Alhambra's gleaming halls,
His baleful message falls
Upon the ears of Morayma :

" The noblest of the noble slain,
" Thy husband, lies upon the plain :
" The cloven turban of thy parent
" Floats upon Xenil's swollen current."

" Woe is me ! "
And wringing hands of agony
She rushes to her balcony
To give her pent feelings vent
And gaze upon the way he went
When with ringing shout and martial air
The chivalry of Granada shone fair
In armour bright and costly cloths bedight,
Telling the wealth and feuds of each proud Knight.

THE MOURNING OF MORAYMA—Continued

- “ You silver shining streak !
“ No more of joy to me you speak
“ Though babbling sweet to groves of myrtle
“ In your orange-scented kirtle ;
“ For Ali Atar, fiercely brave,
“ Lies in your bed a captive slave :
 In no time-honoured tomb will lie,
“ The dear remains of his mortality !
“ And Boabdil, light of mine eyes !
“ Joy of my heart ! Life of my life !
“ Woe is that day of hastening cries,
“ Of shoutings, urging to the strife !
“ All solitary is the way
“ Of thy departure glad and gay !
“ No more, ah ! woe is me, shall pass
“ Thy shadow on the Vega's grass ;
“ The mountain there beyond obscures thy light
“ As clouds withhold the sun from sight
“ And round me falls the night—
“ Ah ! woe is me, Morayma ! ”

AFTER GOETHE

I

Over the mountain range broods peace,
And no breath stirs the leafy wood ;
Birds from their songs have made surcease
And children fall on drowsihood.
Wait but awhile ; so too shall you
Find rest—that no morn may undo.

II

Love wounded sought
A wilderness,
To dream of heal
In desertness ;
Finding my heart
Lying all waste,
It nested there—
Alas ! my guest.

POET'S APOLOGY

One said,—in vestment stole of priestly mode,—
What value holds your song whose soul hath stain?
As only pure in heart may see our God,
So only clean of tongue His ear attain;
And white of soul and chaste of speech are one:
Cease then your singing; 'bate your voice to prayer
For exaltation ill becomes your state;
Music is mockery upon the air
A-quiver with sad wails to mercy's gate—
In sackcloth sit and to the dust make moan.

Another said, who spake in judgment out:
I have found nothing new in this your song;
And even the old notes falter; there's no doubt,
I say, 'tis valueless; *I* say, who long
Have weighed the good and bad of singers rare:
So spare your pains; all has been better said
By surer lips now communing with dust;
All lived and sung by the immeasurable dead;
Why clamour heaven with your puny gust
Of passion? Cease to vex the long-suffering air

POET'S APOLOGY—Continued

The poet said : Once, on a holiday,
And on a night of June, I lodged within
A wood, and by an open casement lay
Listening the melodious floods of long-pent pain
A nightingale was pouring on the gloom ;
I asked not whether sin had caused her woe,
Nor why old themes engaged her trembling songs
Content her living voice could thrill me so—
As these poor notes do one that waits and longs
By a lone lattice, in a dim, sad room.

TO A SPRING FLY

A Whim

Last fall I cursed
Thy whole pestiferous tribe ;
To-day I bless, would guard,
Caress thee, bribe
Thy stay, so I bewonder may
That airy rainbow gauze
Thou spread'st for this old world's applause
Or list thy quiet song all day ;
Rejoicing in thee as a token,
A word incarnate, never broken,
Sure that Spring's promise shall not be delayed.
Tho' solitary now
As mateless bird on leafless bough,
Or single greening blade
In winter's fallow,
I know the swallow
In far-off climes the rustle understood
Of thy unfolding wing
As signal for the awakening
Of a multitude.
And in my delight,
Even as I write,
I see her skim the topmost clouds in flight—
What—buzz in indignation ?
Nay, nay—joy's but anticipation—
Who knows but that to-morrow
As well for me
As thee
Her coming may bring sorrow.

A DREAM

Last night a dream alternately
Made sad and bright the hours of sleep ;
And tho' the morning saw it blurred,
Yet it was somewhat thus :—

A voice tumultuous uprose
And mighty, as it might be seas
In impact, rushing floods commingling
Over the corpse of continents
Sudden submerged ; crashed then along
The mountain ranges—seat of Truth
And pillars of the palaces
Wherein men set their deities—
Clamorous from ridge to ridge with news
Of Change impending, when the plains
Became a very wilderness
Of clashing sound, and stirred with men
As cities in the morning prime ;
Brief space it seemed the din prevailed
When prophecy or portent rather—
For its boding was as yet but vague,
Dim, inarticulate, rousing
To shadowy, fear-fed expectation—
Gave way to silence utter, deep
As that which sways the secret depths
Of a man's soul making, a season,
The inhospitable way of earth.

A DREAM—Continued

Rapid had been the leaping peals.
From silence had the voice proceeded
And into silence swiftly dropped ;
Like in its action and effects
To meteors flashing from nothingness
Forward to nothingness thro' the skies,
Awakening in untutored breasts
Of forest hordes both wonderment
And awe and direful ecstasy.
Men left in sadness home and goods,
And clusters grew of fugitives
On the mountains' lower slopes,
As in the fabled deluge time ;
Despair in lamentations rent
The empty air ; and one in tones
Above the rest cried piteously :
" Are we not mocked enough of men ;
And must the heavens too add torture ? "
Then from empyreal heights there fell
Such sound as muted all earth's cries—
A melody of liquid sweetness,
As by a thousand 'cellos played
In unison ; I saw no face ;
And yet my thoughts were fixed upon
Del Sarto's fresco " Carita,"
As one dream set within another—
Thus did I catch a message fair
Of some swift coming reign of love.

PRINTED BY
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BOURNEMOUTH

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